Mr. Biehn’s Student Teaching Week Five Journal

Cooperating teacher: Mr. Brenner

Supervisor: Dr. Dammers

Day one, April 19th

This week is all half days, so the classes are basically regular 40 minute classes. This week, we continued the Piano class doing the left and right hand for the C and G7 chords. Today I played the pieces for them and taught the lessons and then went through the theory books. It seemed like a lot of work, but I told them what to focus on for each day of practice and they understood what they needed to do. This week, I will be assessing their written and playing tests on Wednesday and Friday.

Day two, April 20th

In Band class, we went through “El Relicario” and “Fanfare Majestic” to try and get them more familiar with both, especially since “El Relicario” they sight read last Friday. The focus was to get them to add some dynamics to the pieces and get more of a sense of phrasing in the melodic lines in “Fanfare Majestic”. Due to the shortened period, we did not have enough time to get to the other pieces. I do not foresee getting to any other pieces until Friday, which my co-op already said that he would take, and I can start learning more of the scores for next week when I have the full class and the full period of 84 minutes.

Day three, April 21st

Today, we had another outbreak in Homeroom with another fight right outside of our room. For some reason they like to have their fights in B hallway and nowhere else in the building, at least since I have been here. This fight was more intense than the last one because one of the students was in a head lock and his head was being slammed into the locker. I got to see the security in action. They were saying “Move Move Move and Get Out Of The Way” throughout the building until they got to the fight and quickly broke it up. I would have gotten involved myself, but I am not allowed to touch the students in any way, plus I could get sued for whatever money I do not have. I have been in situations like that before and I know what to do. Plus, my Uncle was a Prison Guard and taught me a lot about how to take people out of the action without actually hurting them. Anyway, I guess I am getting the full experience of what it would be like teaching in an urban school even though I grew up with it as a student. It is different as a teacher, because there are different rules to follow.

Day four, April 22nd

Today was my observation day, which went well as far as control over the students and the pacing of the rehearsal, but there was one crucial mistake. No baton and I needed a better warm-up session. Some of my fix-it techniques and things could be broken down a little further, but overall I still felt good about what I was accomplishing with the students through rehearsal with the two pieces that we were working on. The baton is an easy quick fix and for me it is actually easier to work with. I thought not to use the baton since the students were not used to it because my co-op did not use a baton with them. I was wrong and I should have gone with my gut instinct of getting them used to it in the first place. By heart, I like using the baton for everything because I can get more expressive and get more emotion out of the band, with dynamics and legato parts.

Day five, April 23rd

Today my co-op took the band class and I played in on trombone, but I was trying to learn the scores as well so that I would be more familiar with them the next week. For the Piano classes, I tested the students on their playing tests with the C and G7 chords and melodies. They had to pick two songs (one from each page). I used the speaker system to connect only my headphones with the one student that was playing while the others could still practice and get ready when their turn comes up. It went well, and I was either right on or one off with my co-op’s assessment with taking points off. I even explained to each student what they did wrong so that they can work on it for the next song or the following week’s assessment test. All of the things they did wrong are relevant to any piece of music. Most of it was rhythmic and getting the finger position correct on the G7 chord.